THE OBSERVER.

BY BEATRICE IRONSIDE.

The friend of Socrates, the friend of Plato,
But above all, the friend of truth.

BALTIMORE: Printed (for the Editor) by JOSEPH ROBINSON, and published every Saturday morning, at No. 4, North Charles-Street; where Subscriptions, Communications, Advertisements, &c. are received.....Terms of subscription, Five Dollars a year, payable in advance.

Vol. II. *Saturday, September* 5, 1807. *No.* 10.

For the Observer.

.....

CRITICAL HISTORY OF POVERTY.

.....

It is difficult precisely to fix on the epoch of Poverty, or to mark with accuracy the moment of its birth. Chronologists are silent; and those who have formed genealogies of the Gods, have not noticed this Deity's, though she has been admitted as such in the Pagan heaven, and has had temples and altars on earth. The Fabulists have pleasingly narrated of her, that at the feast which Jupiter gave on the birth of Venus, she modestly stood at the gate of the palace, to gather the remains of the celestial banquet; when she observed Plutus, the God of Riches, inebriated, not with wine, but with nectar, roll out of the heavenly residence; and, passing into the Olympian gardens, he threw himself on a vernal bank. She seized this opportunity to become familiar with the God. The frolicksome Deity honoured her with his caresses; and, from this amour sprung the God of Love, who resembles his father in jollity and mirth, and his mother in his nudity. This fabulous narration is taken from the divine Plato. Let us now turn to it's historic extraction.

Poverty, though of remote antiquity, did not exist from the earliest times. In the first age, distinguished by the epithet of the Golden, it certainly was unknown. In the terrestrial Paradise it never entered. This age, however, had but the duration of a flower: when it finished, Poverty began to appear. The ancestors of the human race, if they did not meet her face to face, knew her in a partial degree. She must have made a rapid progress at the time of Cain; for Josephus informs us, he scoured the country with a banditti. Proceeding from this obscure period, it is certain she was firmly established in the Patriarchal age. It is then we hear of merchants, who publickly practised the commerce of vending slaves, which indicates the utmost degree of Poverty. She is distinctly marked by Job:...

this holy man protests, that he had nothing to reproach himself with respecting the poor, for he had assisted them in their necessities.

As we advance in the scriptures, we observe the legislators paid great attention to their relief. Moses, by his wise precautions, endeavoured to soften the rigours of this unhappy state. The division of lands, by tribes and families; the septennial jubilees; the regulation to bestow at the harvest-time, a certain portion of all the fruits of the earth for those families who were in want; and the obligation of his moral law, to love one's neighbour as one's self; were so many mounds erected against the inundations of poverty. It was thus that the Jews, under their aristocratic government, had few or no mendicants. Their kings were unjust; and, rapaciously seizing on inheritances which were not their right, increased the numbers of the poor. From the reign of David there were oppressive governors, who devoured the people as their bread. It was still worse under the foreign powers of Babylon, of Persia, and the Roman Emperours. Such were the extortions of their publicans, and the avarice of their governours, that the number of mendicants was dreadfully augmented; and it was probably for that reason that the opulent families consecrated a tenth part of their property fortheir succour, as appears in the time of the evangelists...In the preceding ages, no more was given...as their casuists assure us...than the fortieth, or thirtieth part; a custom which this unfortunate nation, to the present hour, preserve, and look on it as an indispensable duty; so much so, that if there are no poor of their nation where they reside, they send it to the most distant parts. The Jewish merchants always make this charity a regular charge in their transactions with each other; and, at the close of the year, render an account to the poor of their nation.

By the example of Moses, the ancient legislators were taught to pay a similar attention to the poor. Like him, they published laws respecting the division of lands; and many ordinances were made for the benefit of those whom fires, inundations, wars, or bad harvests, had reduced to want. Convinced that *idleness* more inevitably introduced poverty, than any other cause, they punished it rigorously: the Egyptians made it criminal; and no vagabonds or mendicants were suffered, under any pretence whatever. Those who were convicted of slothfulness, and still refused to labour for the public, when labours were offered to them, were punished with death. It was the Egyptian task-masters who observed that the Israelites were an idle nation, and obliged them to furnish bricks for the erection of those famous pyramids, which are the works of men who otherwise had remained vagabonds and mendicants.

The same spirit inspired Greece. Lycurgus would not have in his republick either *poor* or *rich*: they lived and laboured in

common. As, in the present times, every family has it's stores and cellars, so they had public ones, and distributed the provisions according to the ages and constitutions of the people. If the same regulation was not precisely observed by the Athenians, the Corinthians, and the other people of Greece, the same maxim existed in full force against idleness.

According to the laws of Draco, Solon, &c. a conviction of wilful poverty was punished with the loss of life. Plato, more gentle in his manners, would have them banished. He calls them enemies of the state; and pronounces, as a maxim, that where there are great numbers of mendicants, fatal revolutions will happen; for, as these people have nothing to lose, they seize and plan opportunities to disturb the public repose.

The ancient Romans, whose universal object was the public prosperity, were not indebted to Greece on this head. One of the principal occupations of their Censors was to keep a watch on the vagabonds. Those who were condemned as incorrigible sluggards were sent to the mines, or made to labour on public edifices. The Romans of those times, unlike the present race, did not consider the *far niente* as a pleasing occupation; they were convinced, that their liberalities were ill-placed in bestowing them on such men. The little republicks of the *Bees* and the *Ants* were often held out as an example; and the last, particularly where Virgil says, that they have elected overseers, who correct the sluggards...

"————Pars agmina cogunt
Castigant que moras." VIRGIL.

And, if we may trust the narratives of our travellers, the *Beavers* pursue this regulation more rigorously and exactly than even these industrious societies. But their rigour, although but animals, is not so barbarous as that of the ancient Germans; who, Tacitus informs us, plunged the idlers and vagabonds in the thickest mire of their marshes, and left them to perish by a kind of death that resembled their inactive dispositions.

Yet, after all, it was not inhumanity that prompted the ancients thus severely to chastise idleness: they were induced to it by a strict equity; and it would be doing them injustice to suppose, that it was thus they treated those *unfortunate poor* whose indigence was occasioned by infirmities, by age, or unforeseen calamities. They perhaps exceeded us in genuine humanity... Every family constantly assisted it's branches, to save them from being reduced to beggary; which, to them, appeared worse than death. The magistrates protected those who were destitute of friends, or incapable of labour. When Ulysses was disguised as a mendicant, and presented himself to Eurymachus, this prince, observing him to be robust and healthy, offered to give him employment, or otherwise to leave him to his ill fortune. When the Roman Emperours, even in the reigns of Ne-

ro and Tiberius, bestowed their largesses, the distributors were ordered to except those from receiving a share whose bad conduct kept them in misery; for that it was better the lazy should die with hunger than be fed in idleness.

Whether the police of the ancients was more exact, or whether they were more attentive to practise the duties of humanity, or that slavery served as an efficacious corrective of idleness; it clearly appears how little was the misery, and how few the numbers, of their poor. This they did, too, without having recourse to hospitals.

At the establishment of Christianity, when the Apostles commanded a community of riches among their disciples, the miseries of the poor became alleviated in a greater degree. If they did not absolutely live together, as we have seen religious orders, yet the rich continually supplied their distressed brethren: but matters greatly changed under Constantine. This prince, with the best intentions, published edicts in favour of those Christians who had been condemned, in the preceding reigns, to slavery, to the mines, the galleys, or prisons. The Church felt an inundation of prodigious crowds of these unhappy men, who brought with them urgent wants and corporeal infirmities. The Christian families formed then but a few: they could not satisfy these men. The magistrates protected them: they built spacious hospitals, under different titles, for the sick, the aged, the invalids, the widows, and orphans. The Emperours, and the most eminent personages, were seen in these hospitals, examining the patients. Sometimes they assisted the helpless, and sometimes dressed the wounded. This did so much honour to the new religion, that Julian the Apostate introduced this custom among the Pagans. But the best things are seen continually perverted.

These retreats were found insufficient. Many slaves, proud of the liberty they had just recovered, looked on them as prisons; and, under various pretexts, wandered about the country. They displayed, with art, the scars of their former wounds, and exposed the imprinted marks of their chains. They found thus a lucrative profession in begging, which had been interdicted by the laws. The profession did not finish with them: men of an untoward, turbulent, and licentious disposition, gladly embraced it. It spread so wide, that the succeeding Emperours were obliged to institute new laws; and it was permitted to individuals to seize on these mendicants for their slaves and perpetual vassals: a powerful preservative against this disorder. It is observed in almost every part of the world but ours; and it is thus that no where else they so abound with beggars.... China presents us with a noble example. No beggars are seen loitering in that country. All the world are occupied, even to the blind and the lame. Those who are incapable of labour, live at the publick expence. What is done *there*, may also be

performed *here*. Then, instead of that hideous, importunate, idle, licentious poverty...as pernicious to the police as to morality...we should see the poverty of the earlier ages humble, modest, frugal, robust, industrious, and laborious. Then, indeed, the fable of Plato might be realized: Poverty may be embraced by the god of riches; and, if she did not produce the voluptuous offspring of Love, she would become the fertile mother of Agriculture, and and ingenious mother of the fine Arts, and of all kinds of Manufactures.

FEMALE BEAUTY, AND ORNAMENTS.

The Ladies in Japan gild their teeth; and those of the Indies paint them red. The blackest teeth are esteemed the most beautiful in Guzurat, and in some parts of America. In Greenland, the women colour their faces with blue and yellow. However fresh the complexion of a Muscovite may be, she would think herself very ugly if she was not plaistered over with paint. The Chinese must have their feet as deminutive as those of the she-goats; and, to render them thus, their youth is passed in tortures. In Ancient Persia, an aquiline nose was often thought worthy of the crown; and, if there was any competition between two Princes, the people generally went by this criterion of majesty. In some countries, the mothers break the noses of their children; and, in others, press the head between two boards, that it may become square. The modern Persians have a strong aversion to red hair: the Turks, on the contrary, are warm admirers of these disgusting locks.... The Indian Beauty is thickly smeared with bear's fat; and the female Hottentot receives from the hand of her lover, not silks, or wreaths of flowers, but warm guts and reeking tripe, to dress herself with enviable ornaments.

In China, small eyes are liked; and the girls are continually plucking their eye-brows, that they may be small and long.... The Turkish women dip a gold brush in the tincture of a black drug, which they pass over their eye-brows. It is too visible by day, but looks shining by night. They tinge their nails with a rose-colour.

An ornament for the nose appears to us perfectly unnecessary. The Peruvians, however, think otherwise; and they hang on it a weighty ring, the thickness of which is proportioned by the rank of their husbands. The custom of boring it, as our ladies do their ears, is very common in several nations. Through the perforation are hung various materials; such as green crystal, gold, stones, a single and sometimes a great number of gold rings. This is rather troublesome to them in blowing their noses; and the fact is, some have informed us, that the Indian ladies never perform this very useful operation.

The female head-dress is carried, in some countries, to singular extravagance. The Chinese Fair carries on her head the figure of a certain bird. This bird is composed of copper, or of gold, according to the quality of the person: the wings, spread out, fall over the front of the head-dress, and conceal the temples. The tail, long and open, forms a beautiful tuft of feathers. The beak covers the top of the nose; the neck is fastened to the body of the artificial animal by a spring, that it may the more freely play, and tremble at the slightest motion.

The extravagance of the Myantses is far more ridiculous than the above. They carry on their heads a slight board, rather longer than a foot, and about six inches broad: with this they cover their hair, and seal it with wax. They cannot lie down, nor lean, without keeping the neck very straight; and, the country being very woody, it is not uncommon to find them with their head-dress entangled in the trees. Whenever they comb their hair, they pass an hour by the fire in melting the wax; but this combing is only performed once or twice a year.

To this curious account, extracted from Duhalde, we must join that of the inhabitants of the Land of Natal. They wear caps, or bonnets, from six to ten inches high, composed of the fat of oxen. They then gradually annoint the head with a purer grease; which, mixing with their hair, fastens these *bonnets* for their lives!

HISTORY OF A PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE.

A foreign paper gives the following account of the interposition of Divine Providence in favour of a widow and her family, near Dordrecht, in the province of Holland. This woman was left by her husband, who was an eminent carpenter, a comfortable house, with some land, and two boats for carrying merchandize and passengers on the canals. She was also supposed to be worth about ten thousand guilders in ready money, which she employed in an hempen and sail cloth manufactory, as the means not only of increasing her fortune, but of instructing her children (a son and two daughters) in those useful branches of business.

One night, about nine o'clock, when the workmen were gone home, a person dressed in uniform, with a musket and broad sword, came to her house, and requested lodging. "I let no lodgings, friend," said the widow; "and besides, I have no spare bed, unless you sleep with my son, which I think very improper, being a perfect stranger to us all." The soldier then shewed a discharge from Diesbach's regiment, signed by the major, who gave him an excellent character, and a passport from Comte de Maillebois, governor of Breda.

The widow believing the stranger to be an honest man, as he really was, called her son, and asked him if he would accommodate a veteran, who had served the republick thirty years with reputation, with a part of his bed. The young man consented, and the soldier having been hospitably entertained, withdrew to rest. Some hours after, a loud thumping was heard at the street door, which roused the soldier, who stole softly down stairs, and listened in the hall. The blows were repeated, and the door almost broken through by a sledge, or some heavy instrument. By this time, the affrighted widow and her daughter were running about, and screaming, murder! murder! but the son having joined the soldier, with a case of loaded pistols, and the latter screwing on his bayonet, and fresh priming his piece, which was well filled with slugs, desired the women to retire as bloody work might be expected in a few minutes.

Soon after, the door was burst in, and two fellows entered, and were instantly shot by the son, who discharged both his pistols at once. Two more returned the favour from without, but luckily without effect; and the intrepid veteran taking immediate advantage of the discharge of their arms, rushing on them like a lion, ran one through the body with his bayonet, and while the other was running away, lodged the contents of his piece between his shoulders, and he dropped dead on the spot. They then closed the door as well as they could, reloaded their arms, made a good fire and watched till day-light, when a number of weavers and spinners came to resume their employment. We may guess their horrour and susprise on seeing four men dead on a dung-hill, whither the soldier had dragged them before the door was shut.

The burgomaster and his syndic attended, and took the depositions of the family, relative to this affair. The bodies were buried in a cross-road, and a stone erected over their grave, with this inscription:..." Here lie the wretched carcasses of four unknown ruffians, who deservedly lost their lives in an attempt to rob or murder a worthy woman and her family. A stranger who slept in the house, to which Divine Providence undoubtedly directed him, was the principal instrument in preventing the perpetration of such horrid designs, which justly entitles him to a lasting memorial, and the thanks of the public. John Adrian de Vries, a discharged soldier, from the regiment of Diesbach, a native of Middleburg in Zealand, and upward of seventy years old, was the David who slew two of these Goliahs; the rest being killed by the son of the family... *In honorem, et gratitudinis ergo, Dei Optimi Maximi, pretaris et innocentiæ, summi protectoris... Magistratus et Concilium Civitatis Dortrechiensis hoc Signam poni curavere* XX. *Die Nov. Annoque Salutaris humani*, 1785.

The widow presented the soldier with one hundred guineas and the city settled a handsome pension on him for the rest of his life.

OSMIR.

AN EASTERN ESSAY.

The predecessors of Osmir were ignoble and obscure. For a race of generations they wept the conflicts of indigence, nor could the toils of application crown their efforts with advantage, nor the utmost frugality secure their labours from distress; the importance of command never owned their authority, and the radiance of splendour never shone on their dwelling.... They eat of the bread of industry, they drank the waters of perseverance, they lived unnoticed and undistinguished among the children of poverty, as one atom in the sun-beam is undistinguished from another, and as the ebullitions of a current which float for a moment on its surface and die, even so they disappeared and were remembered no more.

But the tempest of malediction began at length to subside, and the severity of fortune to abate her resentment. Malevolence was wearied with undeserved persecution, and prosperity beheld the cot of wretchedness with an auspicious smile, and determined to lavish upon Osmir what she had withheld from his ancestors. He was addicted to Industry, to perseverance and toil; his principles were therefore the surest basis whereon time was to erect the superstructure of gilded affluence. In a few years Osmir contemplated the fruits of his application, which animated his endeavours to advance with more hasty strides in the road of progressive grandeur; riches were accumulated, possessions were established, his habitation surpassed the pomp of oriental magnificence, and the report of his opulence was the talk of every mouth, and wafted through every region on the pinions of fame. In order to subdue the murmurs of repining adversity, and establish a position, which though it was probable was yet untrue, that the bounties of Heaven were bestowed upon deserving virtue alone, he resolved to cover his imperfections with the mantle of devotion, by which more liberty was allowed to the passions which lay lurking in secret within the chambers of his heart. Confirmed in this disposition, he was impartial and correct in his dealings with all men; the venom of slander had no influence on his character; for he trod the paths of moral rectitude with exact scrupulosity. Was propitiation ordained to avert the wrath of omnipotence? His head was covered with the ashes of Bethulia, and his loins were mortified with the sack cloth of Nineveh; his piety refused the sustenance which human fragility demands for her functions, and thrice a day he fell postrate at the shrine of the God of nature. Whenever Osmir walked the streets for the purpose of recreation, he was begirt with attendants who showered gold on the multitude, and whom he exhorted in their liberality to more extensive profusion. The widow and the orphan, the desolate and the indigent, all looked for

succour from the bounty of his hand, and all felt the influence of his generous condescension. Not an act that was performed escaped the voice of applause, for if Osmir was liberal, compassionate or just, his merit was instantly registered in the chronicles of fame, who, with her trump of seven thunders, blew a blast round the world which was echoed through the universe.

Such was the life of a mortal whom prosperity delighted to elevate; such was his journey through the vales of desolation, uninfested with the thorns of accident or bitterness, and perfumed with the fragrance of the rose-buds fortune scattered in his way. But whilst Osmir thus employed the happy tenor of his days, now feasting on delicacies at the banquet of plenty, now dancing to the song of happiness in the bowers of ease, the iron hand of time laid its pressure on his temples, the frost of old age was expanded through his veins, and the powers of animation hastened quick to decline. It was in vain to bribe with riches the dreaded minister of death; it was in vain to protract a moment the awful period of dissolution. Summoned at the report of sickness his friends assembled in his chamber, where, stretched on the bed of sorrows, human nature was to be dignified, and human weakness was to be confirmed by an illustrious portrait of expiring virtue. But how great was the excess of disappointment and surprize, when, instead of tranquillity of hope, and ejaculations of charity, their ears were assaulted with the shrieks of despair, and their eyes were affrighted with the terrifick aspect of wretchedness. Osmir, whose visage deformed with terrours, as the brow of heaven with a tempest, was long unable to hearken to the remonstrances of his friends; at length, however, collecting the feeble breath, which, like the flame of a midnight taper, sat quivering on his lips, he uttered these last accents with emphatick efforts, whilst every voice was suspended in silence, and every ear was attention.

"Ye, whom vanity has influenced in the operation of good works, and whom earthly approbation has taught to exult in their merit, let the example of dying disquietudes abate the security of your confidence. Like you, I have floated on the ocean of glory, I have felt my senses enraptured with the melody of praise, and suffered my heart to receive plaudits which my conscience condemned. Like you, I was liberal, because to be liberal was to be eminent, and like you also, I estimated the advantages of heaven by terrestial enjoyments. Prosperity shed around me the partial beams of her favour, nor harboured a doubt, nor hesitated to reflect, if the object of her veneration deserved contempt or esteem. Avarice and vain glory were raging passions of my soul, to heat the furnace of these desires was the sole object of my aim; by the one I was rendered odious to the great dispenser of gifts, and by the other detrimental to the sons and daughters of men. This, by the malig-

nity of its turpitude, which withheld what it had received with the rapacious grasp of a vulture, effaced the character of the Deity imprinted by nature in my soul; and the other by a cruelty more inhuman than murder, has awakened passions in the breast of indigence, which had slept for ever undisturbed, and for the mercenary tribute of undeserved approbation has elevated for a moment to magnificence and state, only to plunge with keener anguish into the gulphs of despair, the wretch whose heart had never sickened for the splendours of pomp, and whose days had moved calm in inglorious obscurity. Yet weak-sighted mortals viewed my actions and admired, whilst the piercing eye of the everlasting beheld their motives and abhorred. Happy should I be to amend the past by the present, or to mitigate the fury of the indignation to come. But the scymitar of vengeance hangs suspended in my view. I hear the sentence of malediction which sounds as thunder in my ears, and I feel the last horrours of agonizing despair. Insulting vanities of a faithless world! why was my heart enamoured of the graces of thy deceit? Only to look with pleasure on thy allurements, is to assume the chains of thy bondage; to seek thy gratifications is to follow pain without profit, and to persevere in thy pursuits is reprobation without hope. A few moments space will evince the dreadful truth, for a few moments space and the life of Osmir is no more. Happy shall you be, my friends, whose errours are corrected by my fatal mistake, and whose minds shall be imprinted with this important remembrance, that no action however splendid can secure the favour of the Deity, unless it correspond with good designs, which can alone stamp its value, and that though you mislead the erring judgment of man by fallacious appearance, 'tis impossible to mislead the unerring judgment of God."

The hand of the omnipotent sealed his lips at these words, and a convulsive agony announced the approach of dissolution; his eyes were averted with horrour from the flying javeline of death, and expiring his last groan, he slept the sleep of his fathers in the tomb of Mahaleel. G——E R—N—DS.

Sir THOMAS ROBINSON *to the Earl of* CHESTERFIELD.

To the Editor of the European Magazine.

SIR,

The letter I now send you has lost its cover; but I think there can be no doubt concerning the person to whom it was addressed. Between the writer and the noble Lord, Dr. Maty observes (*Chesterfield's Works*, Vol. II. 4to edit., p. 449,) that an intimate acquaintance subsisted for above half a century, which gave rise to a very voluminous correspondence. "Should these letters," he adds, "together with the answers, that have been carefully preserved, ever appear in print, as they possibly may, they must prove an agreeable literary acquisition, and furnish

a very striking and progressive picture of modern times." Sir Thomas Robinson died 5th March, 1777.

Queene's-Square, Westminster, 20th March, 1756.

MY LORD,

Multum in parvo was never better applied than to your Lordship's letter of the 6th instant, and for which I return my most grateful acknowledgment. But since your Lordship converses so much with the dead, pray let the living of the present, as well as all future ages, be benefitted by your studies, and make yourself still more immortal, if possible, by transmitting to posterity such lucubrations as the good company of the dead do usually inspire, and as an improved genius, directed by your Lordship's judgment, can easily furnish; for what has already dropt from your pen, gives you as good a right as any one ever had to say,

Exegi monumentum ære perennius.

I think I have heard that the Egyptians called books the physic of the soul. If so, your Lordship may, if you please, as much perpetuate your name by administering intellectual physic, as ever Hippocrates or Galen did by administering corporeal; and if our religion admitted of deification, I should expect to see you placed upon the right hand of Æsculapius.

More memoirs you writ for; more memoirs you shall now have.

I have lately seen a letter from Voltaire, who praises the condition of the evening of his life with this expression, that to be serene and calm is the best lot of that period. He says, he spends his winters near Lausanne, and his summers near Geneva, without care and without kings; and rightly observes, that after sixty, the place of reason is a private station; which your lordship by your present choice seems to approve of. To this he adds, that he's astonished to see two wise and great nations sacrificing their people, and squandering their wealth, in a quarrel for a few acres of ice and snow inhabited by wolves and savages in Canada; and, in short, his whole reasoning upon this head may perhaps be thought right by both nations before this squabble ends, which our ministry daily think more serious, especially as the Marshals Richelieu and Bellisle and the Prince of Conty now direct the Councils of France, and his Most Christian Majesty takes to his bottle, which will keep his head warm, and consequently fit him to receive the warmest counsels such military men can give.

The French king's answer to the Dutch, when asked an explanation about his tremendous preparations, was, that he would not give one; but told them, by his ambassador at the Hague, that so far from permitting them to assist us with a single man, he expected them to aid him, if necessary, to chastise, and punish that piratical nation. If after this the Dutch refuse to ful-

fil their treaties with us, they cease to be an independent people, and can no longer claim the title of Hogan Mogan.

The two places we are now in fear of, from the destination of some ships and transports lately sailed from Brest, are Halifax, in North America, and Barbadoes, or the Leeward Islands, in the West-Indies. Give us a naval war with the French, has been the wish of all true fighting Britons since I knew the world. Our wish is at last obtained, and we are now frightened not a little. I often reflect on your lordship's observation when the war broke out :—" Mark the end of it!"

Every Englishman is ordered out of France, without excepting the sick at Montpelier, or the men of business or ladies of pleasure at Paris. Among others, my cousin's child (Colim Wymondsell) had not interest enough to reverse the fatal decree ; from whence I remark, that either the French have lost their taste, or the lady her beauty. Be it as it may, to Brussels she is now retired.

There is very great difficulty in fixing on funds for raising an income sufficient to pay the interest of the two millions we have borrowed. The bricks are laid aside, and they contend to lay also aside the proposed duty on plate, so as to confine ourselves to the 20s. additional duty on ale licences alone. 'Tis calculated that there are now 100,000 ale-retailers in the kingdom, one tenth part of which are within the bills of mortality: should the bill pass, it is thought the number will be reduced to 70,000; which nevertheless, say they, will raise more than we want, therefore spare the plate. This is virtually saying, in my opinion, spare ourselves, and as Peter says, damn the poor : for the rich use plate, and the poor drink ale. In the debate last Wednesday on this subject, Mr. Coventry, of Bridport, stood up for the first time, and spoke well, but finished with great humour by the apostolical story of the opposition Paul met with from the silver-smiths at Ephesus, so that it might have gone hard with him had he not been assisted by the town-clerk (Murray.) The allusion produced a hoarse laugh ; and upon a division, the question was carried only by 129 to 120...next Monday decides the affair : in short, 'tis said we shall have a new Chancellor of the Exchequer ; and people whisper, that the king has declared he will never again have a foolish Chancellor of the Exchequer from Worcestershire, as it only tends to increase the peerage.

You will laugh at the disposition made by some mug-house politicians ; for such I suppose they are who have settled a new administration as follows :...His Grace of N....., to his old station ; Mr. P....., the first Commissioner of the Treasury ; Mr. G....., Chancellor of the Exchequer ; Duke of D.....e to his former post ; Lord H....., to Ireland ; Duke of D.. ....., to a pension ; and Sir G..... L....., to a peerage. Much of this has been in the papers, together with a short epigram on the last mentioned, which, lest you may not have happened to

see it there, I have inclosed, as I did some posts ago Signora Mingotti's answer to Vaneschi, which had its merit, and is equal to her spirited appeal to the publick.

The Speaker of Ireland is reported to be now the most unpopular man in that kingdom, as it is supposed that he is soon to be made an Irish Earl, with 25,000l. a-year for supplying his new dignity for thirty-two years, and Mr. Ponsoby to be let into his Chair. Having got now what he aimed at, by courting the favour of the populace, I suppose he will, with others of the same stamp, from henceforth cry...*Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo.*

The D. of B. has lost in the Committee Room too questions relating to the new Islington Road, though it was obstinately fought on both sides, for the division on the first was 86 to 70, which is a greater number than I ever remember in a private Committee; but they say the merits were of one side, and his Grace on the other; for the first question was, to throw the road opposite to his house by the way of Fig-lane; and the reason given for it was, its being half-a-mile about only: to which it was answered, that in our great northern or western roads half-a-mile about might perhaps be thought a trifle not worth contending for; but in a road which in the whole was not to extend much above three quarters of a mile, half-a-mile about was a compliment too great for any private man to expect. The second question was for a restrictive clause to prevent building beyond his house, which he lost by 15. Mr. F... attended both days and very warm debates have arisen on this occasion...and they say, 'tis very unusual for the Minister of the House of Commons to attend private Committees.

The Lords Lieutenants and Custos Rotulorums in London have been very inactive in summoning all those under the denomination of Deputy Lieutenants, and Justices of the Peace, now resident here, in order to consider and fix upon the best methods for enlisting soldiers for the new regiments, and picking up all straggling sailors; and orders have been accordingly sent to the country; which, with respect to the latter race of mortals, are really almost as arbitrary, though not so cruel or unnecessary, as the proscriptions of the Roman Triumvirate.

Lord Fitzwalter's oysters and port, could not carry him beyond his 88th year. It had been much better for Lord H....., had he departed four years sooner, as the will then subsisting was one whereby he was left sole executor; but by one since, the deceased Lord has left 500l. to Lord Ancram; to Lord Newbottle, 500l.; to Lady Ancram, 6000l.; and to their daughter, at eighteen, 18,000l., with the interest to the mother till she comes to that age. Besides, Lady Ancram gets by her mother's settlement 500l. per annum out of the Post-Office, and Lord H...., 1500l. a-year more out of that office, together with about 12000l. which it is thought the house in Pall-mall, and some effects on the Hotel de Ville at Paris, may produce. He also left 1000l. legacy to Lady Holland.

The 3d inst. was his Grace of Cleveland's birth-day, when 100 dishes were, as usual, served up to 20 guests; and the cards of invitation for the evening were to come without hoops. The mantua-makers say they never were more hurried against a birth-day: and indeed the Ladies (to use a ship expression, having been often lately at the Royal Yards,) seemed to be cut down, so that there was no small expense in the mangling of old clothes, besides a great many new suits made, according to this new straight cut, and all in expectation of the fiddle and pipe; but being disappointed, many of their faces appeared as long and lank as their shapes, neither of which could show them much to their advantage.

Lady Lincoln, per la prima Volta, walked about every room of her house on the 16th, being the first time she ever did the honours of a business of this sort: every room above and below was lighted up; and in the course of the evening we saw every person we had ever seen before, and many she had picked up that had always hitherto escaped the search of others.... Westminster Hall was lighted up for the chairs, and the coaches stood in Palace-yard, which prevented any great confusion, and made our ingress and egress pretty easy. I was Aid-de-Camp for the night to my Lady Chesterfield: and I must say, that the Lady of the house did the honours of it with that kind of ease and negligent air as pleased every body, yet without the least appearance of taking any pains to obtain that applause she so deservedly met with.

Routs of the first magnitude are pressing upon one another; for I have always observed as great a struggle, for a day in March, to crowd a private house, as among the Actors in the same month to crowd their benefit-night; though the season be often too warm for any squeezing but what love inspires.

The Dutchess of Norfolk makes a ball for the Duke of Cumberland on 31st inst.; 18 couple above, and 15 couple below stairs. I paid my court greatly to her Grace, by showing what your Lordship said of her and her new house in the first letter you did me the honour to write to me since you got to Bath: give me the satisfaction to rivet myself in her favour, by commissioning me to tell her your Lordship will come to town and attend this ball, and be present at the magnificent goings we are to have on the occasion.

As in time of peace every letter should convey some amorous story, some instance of amity and friendly sentiments, so in war there should always be some instance of a belliferous nature; therefore I must not omit in forming your Lordship that a most bloody action had like to have happened between General Guise and Jecky Barnard, at ———. The bone of contention, or rather the subject in canvas, was a picture: whether it was an original or no, is not material; but every one present agreed

that the two disputants were certainly originals; and to preserve both, great care was taken to prevent bloodshed.

People were alarmed at seeing Lord Holdernesse and Lord Anson going into the King's closet last Sunday morning about ten. From so early a visit, every one imagined something of the utmost importance: the sanguine a joyful victory, the melancholy a fatal defeat: at last the story was known to be as follows:—A letter was brought to Mr. Cleveland, with a copy inclosed of a letter said to have been found in the Fleet by the bearer, the purport of which was, a design to have shot his Majesty as he came from the Opera; but missing that opportunity, the dire intention was to be executed that morning as he went to Chapel. However, his Majesty went as usual to Chapel, and returned thank God! safe and well: for upon a close examination of the bearer, and comparing the copy with the original pretended to have been found, it appeared that they had been both wrote by the same person: so, instead of the expected reward, the discoverer of this plot has got a lodging in Newgate.

The Duke has sent to Deal for a description of the two transport vessels lately taken on the French coast; and the report is, that they are calculated to hold 300 men each, placed on benches in the hold of the vessel, which has but one mast, and draws but four feet water. This must be allowed to be a proof of their intention to invade, should any accident present them with an opportunity: they are not made for sailing, but to pass the sea in tow.

The King, 'tis said, intends to send to both Houses next Tuesday, to acquaint 'em he expects to be soon invaded from France, and to desire a vote of credit.

A report is current, that French money has slackened our Russia ally, and that Sir C. W——— has no credit there: others say, difficulties have arose with regard to the march of the Hessians. These reports, I hope, only arise from some people's fears.

Lord Pembroke was married to Lady Betty Spencer at Langly on Saturday last; on Sunday the whole family came to town; and on Monday the whole fabrick was pulled down, Mr. Leadbetter having contracted to build a new villa for his Grace for 10,000l. Most of the other talked-of matches being slipped off, others are coming on the stocks. Among the rest, Lord G——— L——— makes strong love to Miss T———. It would indeed, I think, be a proper match, because her vivacity would a little animate that Dutch gravity which seems to preponderate in his composition; and as to the finances, they are seldom, if ever, thought of by the sprightly and gay.

Col. W—— is also desperately in love with Miss W——d; which is a match where love alone must be the meagre diet of both parties, for Lord D——— will no way agree to it.

Lord Denbigh has got the *entre* to the elder Crowly, and with Lord Ashburnham, and the younger sister, play at 12d. cribbidge and make love every night. Luck attends some men: here is cut and come again.

Thus it seems to be a doubt whether Mars or Venus shall be the ruling planet in this Island during the ensuing summer; for an embargo has been laid over Great-Britain and Ireland; the maritime beacons, which have been decaying ever since good old Eliza's days, have been ordered to be repaired; and 'tis thought the inland beacons of the kingdom will also be soon ordered to be fitted up.

In answer to these anecdotes, I shall expect from your Lordship some of the most beautiful sentiments, enlivened by the most delicate wit, which I know can give you no trouble but that of writing. Though the lines be no more in number than the paragraphs I now send you, they cannot fail of being agreeable; for I need not repeat, what is well known to your Lordship, how pleased I am, and how happy I am made, when I am assured that any thing I can communicate is well received by one I so much honour and esteem, and to whom I shall always be proud of professing that I am, with the greatest regard and attachment,

My Lord, Your Lordship's most obliged and most obedient humble servant, THOMAS ROBINSON.

For the Observer.

HISTORICAL EPHEMERIS.

The 5th September, 1775, the first Congress assembled at Philadelphia.

The 5th September, 1792, was the last day of the massacree of the prisoners at Paris. They had begun on the first and continued all this time, without any one's opposing them, under the eyes of the Convention and more than 30,000 militia.

The 5th September, 1795, the number of prisoners of state confined in the department of Paris, alone, amounted to 4413.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

FOR THE OBSERVER.

WRITTEN AT ..... SPRINGS.

Ye Sylph's! who haunt these pleasing shades,
And oft at eve, on buxom wing;
Woo Zephyr in the moonlight glades,
Or, wanton, sport around the spring—

O haste! and near my lovely fair,
Take up an envy'd blissful rest!—
Guard her each night with fondest care,
And fil', with heaven'ly dreams her breast!

O! could the blissful task be mine!
What raptu'rous hours this heart should prove!
All other cares I'd pleas'd, resign,
To watch o'er her I fondly love! FREDERICK.

ERATA.—In the last Ephemeris, for *Cassena* read *Cesena*—1776 read 1717.